STATE OF RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF ELECTIONS ERTS USER MANUAL





STATE OF RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF ELECTIONS

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Introduction

The Board of Elections ("BOE") has produced this manual to assist candidates, officeholders and committees with electronic filing of campaign finance reports via the Electronic Reporting and Tracking System ("ERTS").

If you have any problems or questions not resolved by this manual, please call a member of the campaign staff at (401) 222-2345; meet with a member of the campaign finance staff in person; or e-mail the Board at campaignfinance@elections.ri.gov.

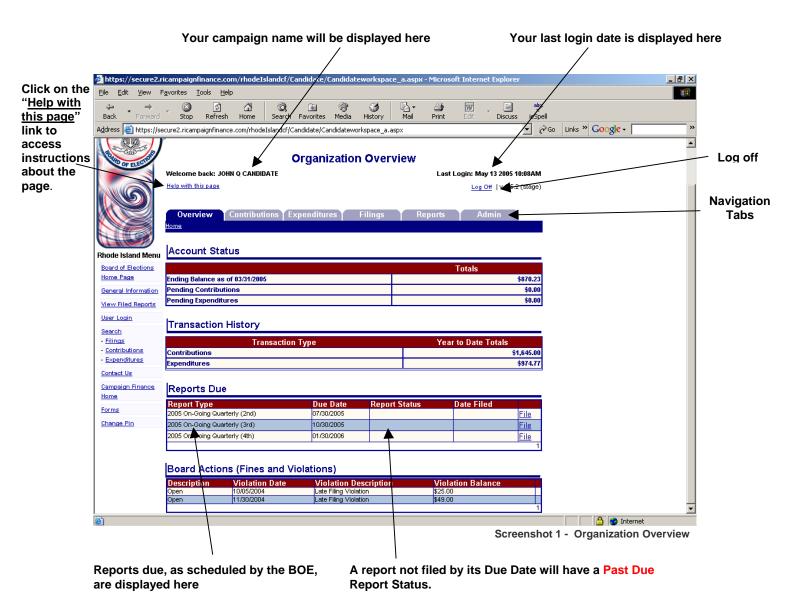
NOTICE Recordkeeping Requirement R.I.G.L 17-25-11.1

It is required that you keep and maintain all receipts, records, and supporting documentation of all transactions for 4 years. ERTS *is not* intended as a proof of transaction should you need it for auditing or other purposes.

It is highly recommended that when you file a report through ERTS you click the "Click here to view report" option and print a paper copy of your filing for your own records.

Getting Around in ERTS

Whenever you login to ERTS you will start at the *Organization Overview* screen seen below:



Navigation Tabs (Figure 1)

The *Navigation Tabs* are the primary way to access most areas within ERTS. From the Navigation Tabs you may access key areas of ERTS.

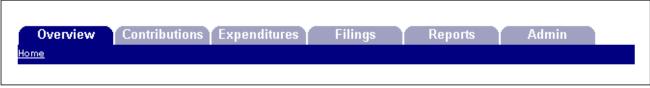


Fig. 1 - Navigation Tabs

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Navigation Buttons

Return	Use this button to return to the previous screen. It is recommended that you use this button instead of the Back button on your Web browser.
Add	Use to add a new contribution or expenditure
Find	Use to find a contribution or expenditure that you have already submitted.
Search	Use to search for an existing donor from a contribution or an existing payee from expenditure.
Submit	Use to submit information to ERTS.

Organization Overview Page

Every user begins in the Organization Overview area. There are four main sections of the Overview area:

Account Status (see Screenshot 2)

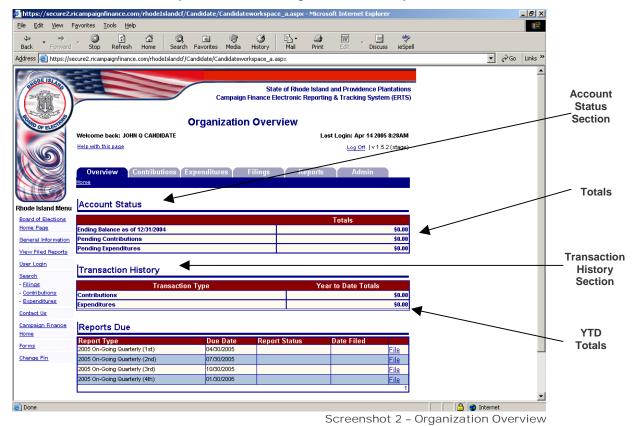
Information contained in this section includes:

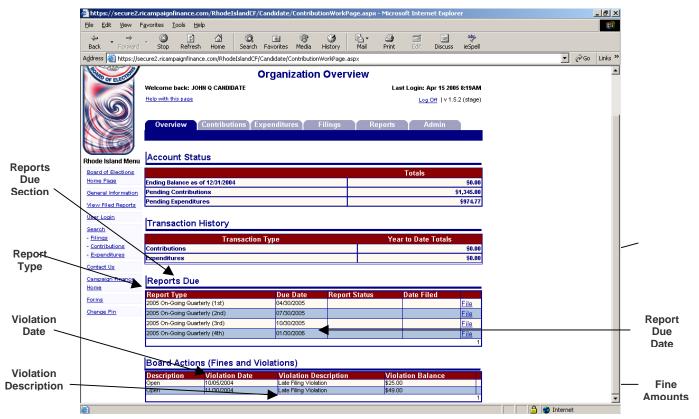
- **Ending Cash Balance:** the ending cash balance of the most recent report received by the BOE.
- **Pending Contributions**: total contributions entered into ERTS, but whose scheduled report has not been filed.
- Pending Expenditures: the total expenditures entered into ERTS, but whose schedule report has not been filed.

Transaction History (see Screenshot 2)

Information in this section includes:

- **Contributions:** the total of all contributions entered into ERTS for reports that have been "Received by the BOE" during the calendar year.
- **Expenditures**: the total of all expenditures entered into ERTS for reports that have been "Received by the BOE" during the calendar year.





Screenshot 3 - Organization Overview

Reports Due (see Screenshot 3)

Information in this section includes:

- Report Type: reports scheduled by the BOE
- Due Date: the date by which a report must be filed through ERTS.
- Report Status: indicates whether the report is past due or rejected.
- Date Filed: this field is blank since the report has not been filed.



To view filings received by the BOE, look under the **Filings** tab.

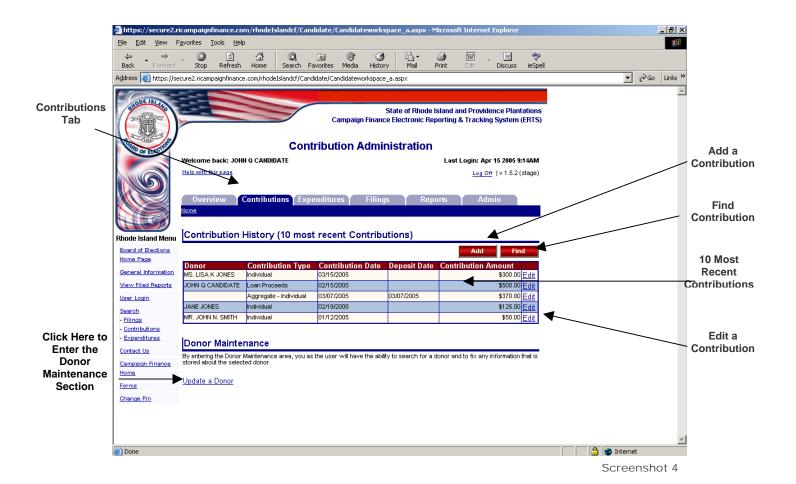
Board Actions (see Fig. 3)

Information in this section includes:

- **Description:** indicates whether a fine or penalty assessed by the BOE is open, paid, revoked or suspended.
- Violation Date: the effective date of the BOE action.
- Violation Description: a description of the BOE action.
- Violation Balance: the current outstanding balance of the fine or penalty.

Contributions

Clicking on the *Contributions* tab brings you to the Contributions section of ERTS. This is where you enter and manage all contributions received by your organization.



Contributions History (see Screenshot 4)

This section allows you to view up to the last 10 contributions entered into ERTS, add new contributions and find and edit contributions already entered into ERTS.

- **Donor:** Name of the donor (if applicable).
- Contribution Type: The type of contribution received, such as Individual, Party, PAC, etc.
- **Contribution Date:** The date the contribution was received by the duly appointed campaign treasurer or deputy treasurer.
- **Deposit Date:** The date the contribution was deposited into a campaign account.
- **Contribution Amount:** The amount of the contribution.
- Edit: The link allows the editing of contribution information for the last 10 contributions entered into ERTS.

Add a New Contribution-General Information (see Screenshot 5)

To add a new contribution into ERTS:

1. click on the **Add** button in the Contributions History section (see Screenshot 4), which brings you to the Contribution Entry page. (see Screenshot 5).

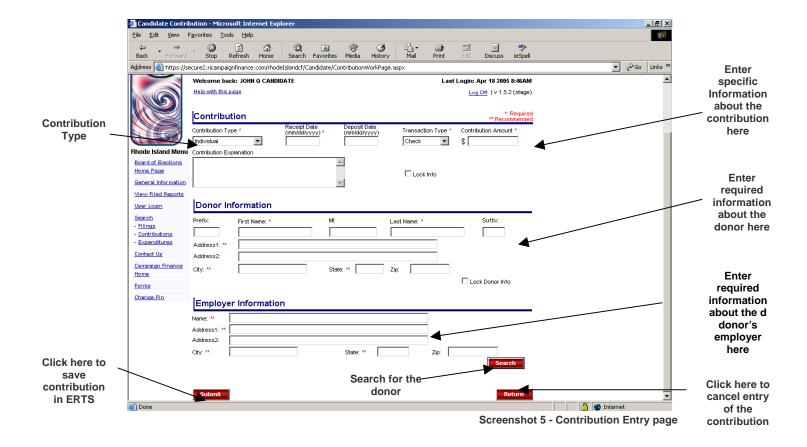
2. locate the "Contribution Type" selection box in the Contribution area and select a contribution type from the drop down list.

Note: The contribution type "Individual" is the default setting in ERTS. (see Screenshot 6) Selecting a different contribution type from the drop down list will cause the page to automatically reload to reflect the relevant and required fields for that particular contribution type.

- 3. Enter the required Contribution information.
- 4. Enter the donor's Last Name, PAC name or Party Committee name in the Donor Information area.
- 5. Click on the **Search** button.
 - a. If Donor Information is already stored in ERTS, select correct name.
 - b. If Donor Information is **not** already stored in ERTS, enter all required Donor Information and Employer Information (if Contribution Type = Individual)

Note: ERTS stores Donor Information for **all** political action committees (PACs) and state and municipal party committees registered in Rhode Island. ERTS stores Donor Information for individual donors to a particular organization once the information is entered initially by said organization.

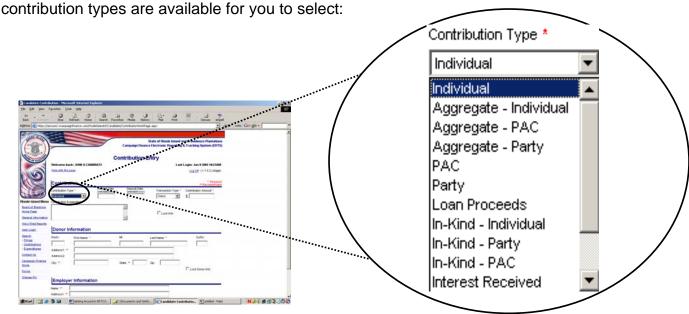
- Click Submit button to save contribution in ERTS.
- 7. Repeat steps 1-6 to continue data entry of contributions received.
- 8. Click on the **Return** button to go back to the Contribution Administration page.



NOTE: It is important that you utilize the "Search" feature whenever adding contributions in order to maintain an accurate donor database and to ensure compliance with annual contribution limits. ERTS has the capability to warn you if a donor exceeds his or her annual contribution limit set by Rhode Island's campaign finance laws.

Contribution Type (see Screenshot 6)

Before adding a new contribution, you must select the appropriate Contribution Type from the drop down list in the Contribution area of the Contribution Entry page. The following



Screenshot 6 - Add a Contribution Screen

*Note, in addition to the selections above, you may also choose **Refund/Rebate**, **Other Receipt**, or **Matching Public Funds** as contribution types (these choices are **not** displayed above).

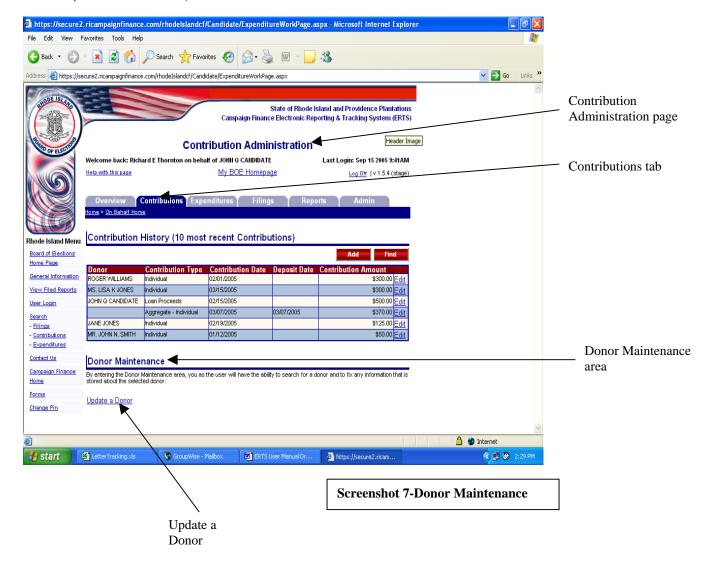


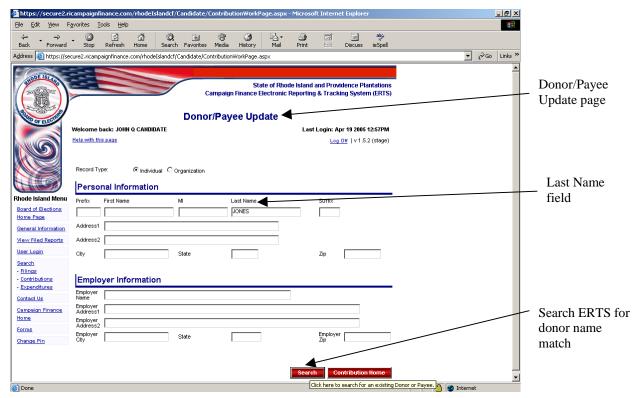
If you leave a *required* field blank, the contribution will not be accepted. You will receive a warning message in red text indicating which required fields you failed to correctly enter information into.

Donor Maintenance (see Screenshot 7)

To update or add Personal or Employment Information for an individual donor previously entered into ERTS by an organization:

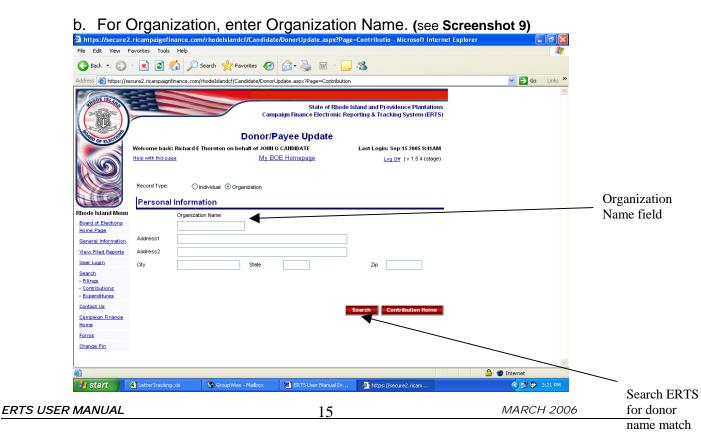
- Proceed to the **Donor Maintenance** area located under the **Contributions** tab on the **Contribution Administration** page (see **Screenshot 7**)
- 2. Click on <u>Update a Donor</u> link, which brings the user to **Donor/Payee Update** page (see **Screenshot 8**)





Screenshot 8 - Donor/Payee Update Page/Search for donor individual

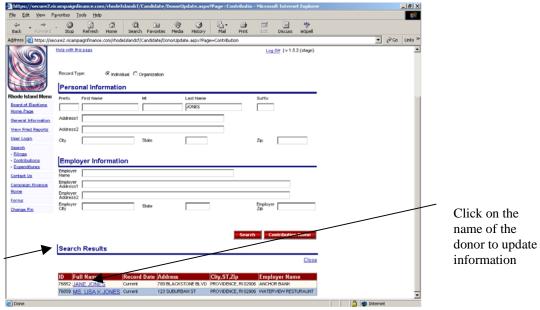
- 3. Click the appropriate Record Type: Individual or Organization
 - a. For Individual, enter the donor's last name into the Last Name field. (see Screenshot 8)



Screenshot 9-Search for donor organization

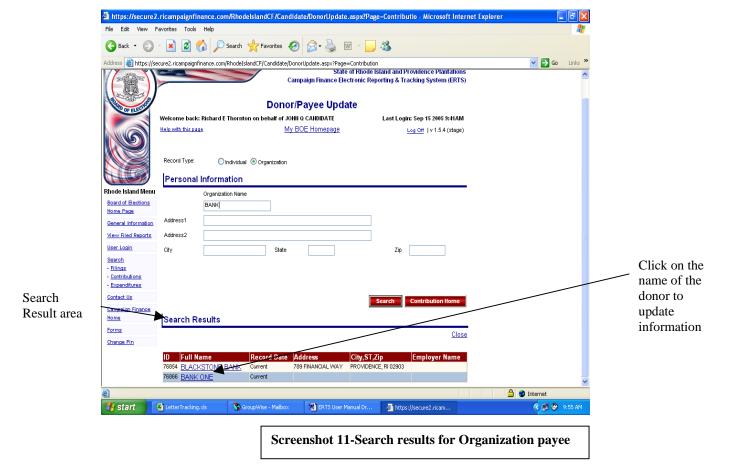
4. Click Search.

- a. For Record Type: Individual, the names of all individual donors previously entered into ERTS by the user's organization will be searched and any matches will be displayed in the Search Results area. (see Screenshot 10).
- b. For Record Type: Organization, the names of all organization payees (i.e. for Interest Received and Refunds/Rebates) previously entered into ERTS by the user's organization will be searched and any matches will be displayed in the Search Results area. (see **Screenshot 11**).

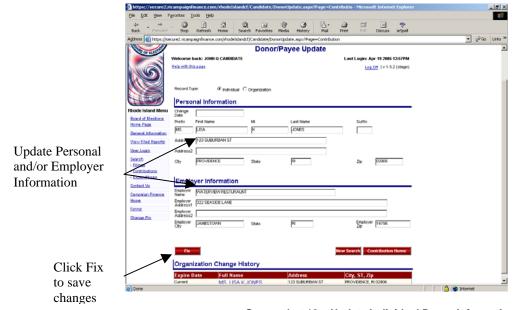


Search Results area

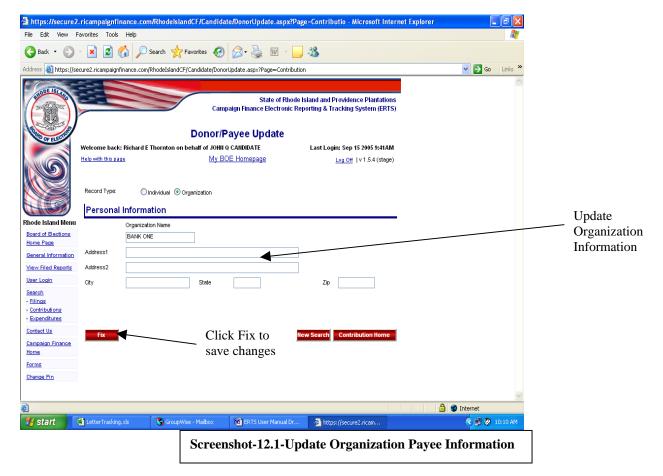
Screenshot 10 - Search Results for Individual donor



- 5. Click on the name of the individual donor or organization payee to update/fix.
- 6. Update the individual donor's (see **Screenshot 12**) or organization payee's (see **Screenshot 12.1**) information.



Screenshot 12 - Update Individual Donor Information



7. Click **Fix** at the bottom-left of the screen to save any changes. (Note: you will be returned to the Contribution Administration page.)

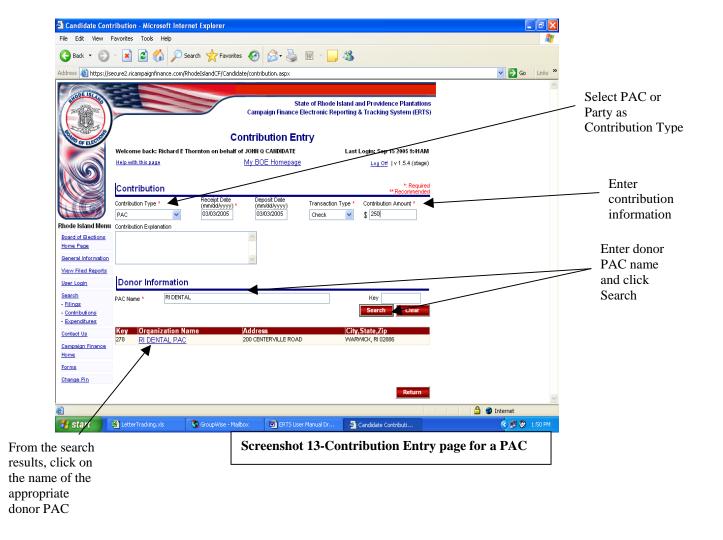
Add a Contribution-Political Action Committee (PAC) or Political Party Committee When adding a contribution from a PAC or Party:

- 1. Go to the Contribution Administration page located under the Contributions tab.
- 2. Click on the Add button in the Contribution History area.
- 3. Select Contribution Type = PAC or Party from the drop down list located in the Contribution area of the Contribution Entry page. The page will automatically refresh, bringing the user to the correct data entry screen.
- 4. Enter complete contribution information.
- 5. In the Donor Information area, enter the name of the PAC or Party or a Key #, if known.
- 6. Click on the Search button. (see Screenshot 13)

Note: The correct names and addresses of all PACs and Parties registered in RI are stored in ERTS. Entering the PAC or Party name incorrectly will yield no results from the search. If the user has difficulty locating a PAC or Party stored in ERTS, enter only the first word in the PAC's or Party's name, or a portion thereof, or use the symbol "%" as a wildcard before or after a word contained in the PAC or Party name.

7. Click on the appropriate PAC name from the search results. (see Screenshot 13)

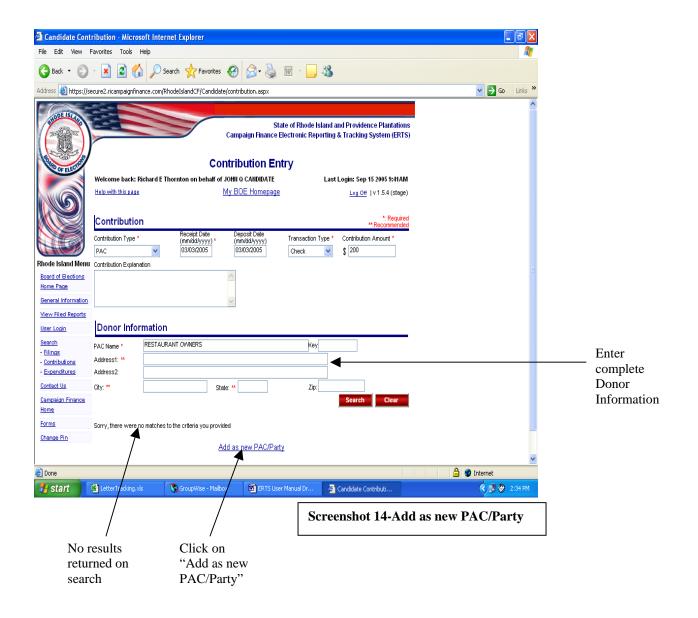
8. Click on the Submit button to save the entry in ERTS.

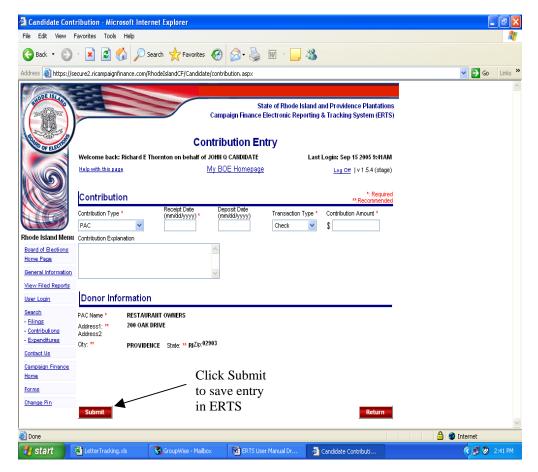




- Screenshot 13.1-Submit registered PAC/Party contribution
- 9. Click on the Submit button to save the entry in ERTS. (see Screenshot 13.1)
- 10. If the search for a PAC or Party name ultimately yields no results, complete all appropriate fields in the Donor Information area and click the Add as new PAC/Party link. (see Screenshot 14)
- 11. Click on the Submit button to save the entry in ERTS. (see Screenshot 14.1)

Note: Accepting a contribution from a PAC or Party not registered in RI is not allowed under RI campaign finance law. Generally speaking, if the user adds a new PAC or Party, either the original search was not comprehensive enough, or a contribution was received from an illegal source and must be returned to the donor.





Screenshot 14.1-Submit new PAC/Party

Find a Contribution

A user may need to find a contribution previously entered into ERTS to:

- ♦ Update entry
- ♦ Delete entry
- Return funds to the contributor
- Record contribution as unavailable due to Non-Sufficient Funds (NSF).

Searching ERTS for a contribution is done from the Contributions Administration page (see Fig. 15). Click on the *Find* button to access the *Contribution Update* page (see Fig 13).

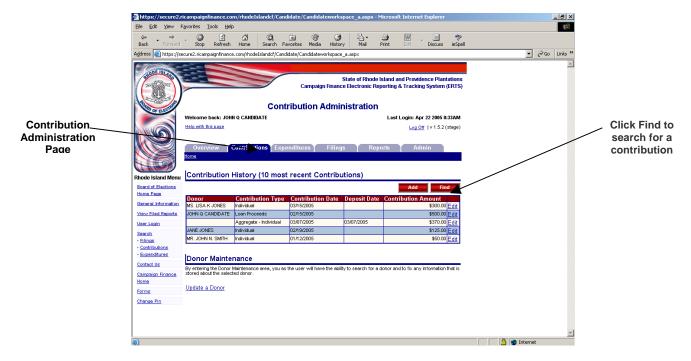


Figure 15- Contribution Administration

At the Contributions Update page, enter in the as much information about the contribution as you know. For example, enter in the last name of the donor and/or the contribution amount (see Fig. 16).

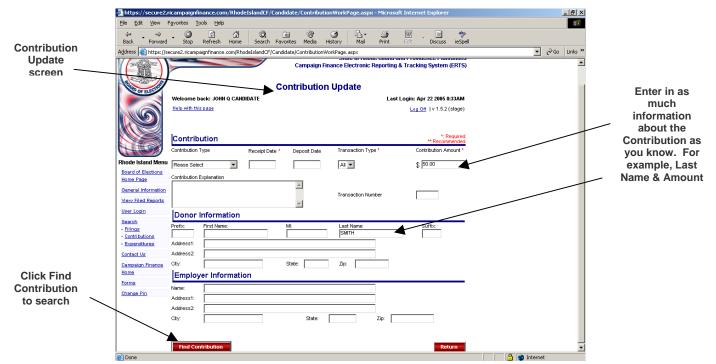


Fig. 16 - Contribution Update page

The results for the search will appear at the top of the page (see Fig. 17). If no results are displayed, try broadening your search by including less information, such as only the Last Name. If the search yields results, click on one of the options shown to the right of the contribution.

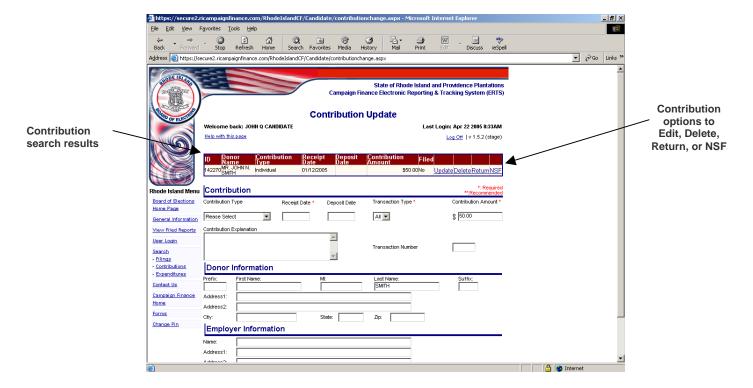


Fig. 17 - Contribution search results

The options displayed are:

• **Update:** Allows you to change details for the contribution.

Delete: Delete the contribution from ERTS.

Return: Used if you returned a contribution to a donor

NSF: Used when a contribution is returned for insufficient funds

Updating a Contribution (See Fig. 18)

If you choose to update a contribution you searched for, click the *Update* link to be taken to the *Contribution Update* page. Change any details of the contribution which need to be changed. The only detail you *cannot* change is the Contribution Type. Once you are finished, click *Update Contribution*.

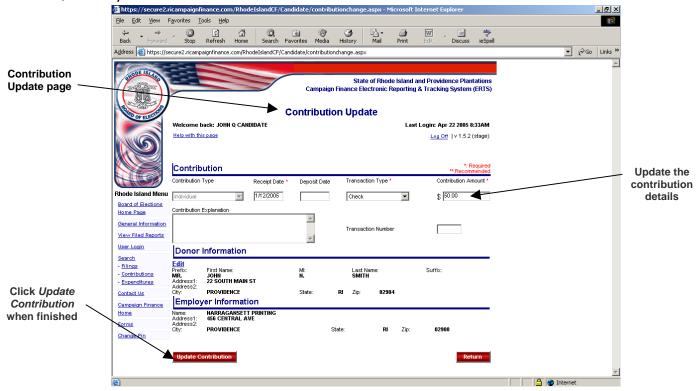


Fig. 18 - Updating a Contribution page

Deleting a Contribution

If you need to delete a contribution you searched for, click the "Delete" link (see Fig. 17) and a modified version of the Update Contribution page will display. A confirmation message asking if you wish to delete the contribution will display at the top-left of the screen. Click "Yes" delete the contribution or "No" to cancel.

Returning a Contribution

In the event you need to return a contribution to a contributor, search for the contribution and click the "Return" link, which will bring up the Return Contribution page (see Fig. 19). Enter in the amount you are returning to the donor and complete any of the additional fields as needed. Click the "Return Contribution" button to submit the data to ERTS.

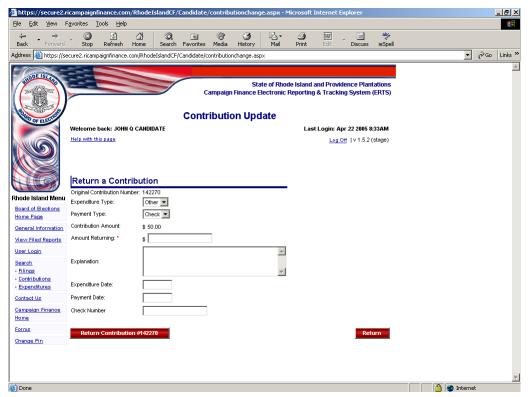


Fig. 19 - Return a Contribution page

Non-Sufficient Funds (NFS)

If a donor made a contribution to you with a check and the check was returned by the bank due to Non-Sufficient Funds (NFS), search for the contribution and click the *NFS* link to bring up the *NSF Check* page. Enter the date the check was returned and provide a brief explanation. Click the *Continue NSF* button to submit the change to ERTS.

Expenditures

Clicking on the *Expenditures* tab will bring you to the Expenditures section of ERTS. This is where you can enter and manage all the expenditures of your organization.

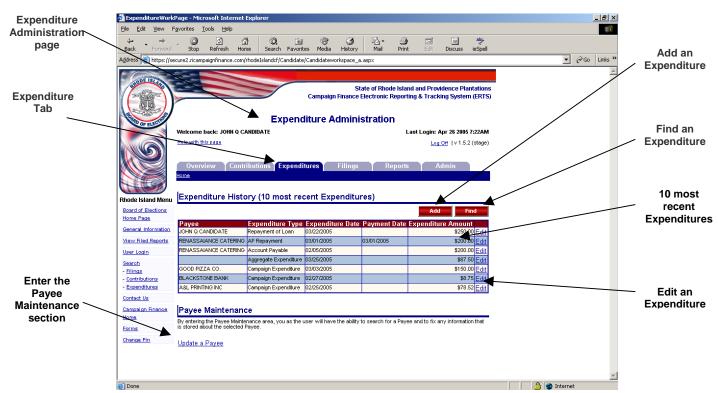


Fig. 20 - Expenditure Administration page

Expenditures History Section (see Fig. 20)

This section allows you to view the last 10 expenditures entered into ERTS. The following detail is provided for each of the contributions:

- Payee: The payee for the expenditure
- Expenditure Type: This is the type of expenditure.
- Expenditure Date: This is the date the expenditure was incurred. This date will
 be the same as the Payment Date for expenditure types not requiring an
 expenditure date.
- Payment Date: This is the date the expenditure was paid.
- Contribution Amount: The amount of the expenditure.

Adding a New Expenditure (see Fig. 21)

In order to add a new expenditure in ERTS, you must click the **Add** button in the Expenditure *History* section (see Fig. 20). The *Expenditure Entry* page will then appear (see Fig 21). The Expenditure Entry page has two sections that must be completed. You should always select an *Expenditure Type* from the scroll box. This is important since the required fields on the page will change depending on the *Expenditure Type* selected (see Expenditure Type below for additional explanation). The following sections are found on the *Expenditure Entry* page:

- Expenditure: Specific Information about the expenditure being added
- **Payee Information**: Required information about the payee to whom the expenditure was paid.

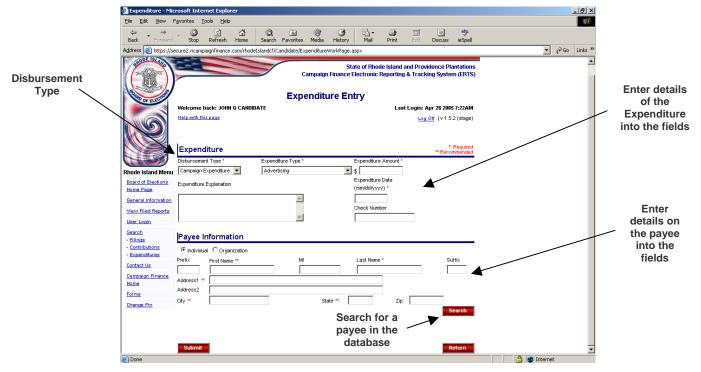


Fig. 21 - Entering an Expenditure

Disbursement Type (see Fig. 21)

Before entering any information for a new expenditure, you must select a *Dispersion Type* from the first scroll box at the upper-left of the *Expenditure Entry* page. The following disbursement types are available for you to select:

- Campaign Expenditure:
- Aggregate Expenditure
- Repayment of Loan
- Refund Contribution
- Account Payable
- AP Repayment

Once you select an expenditure type, the page will reload to reflect the relevant and required fields for that particular expenditure type. Once you have selected an expenditure type, you may then enter data into the rest of the fields on the page.



If you leave a *required* field blank, the contribution will not be accepted. You will receive a warning message in red text indicating which required fields you failed to enter information into.

Searching for a Payee (see Fig. 20)

Once you have entered a payee and the associated expenditure into ERTS, you do not need to retype the payee's information if there is another expenditure to them from your organization. Simply select the *Expenditure Type* and enter the required details regarding the expenditure. Type the Payee's last name or organization name into the appropriate field in the Payee Information section, then click Search. A list of possible matching payees will appear below the fields. Select the correct payee to which the expenditure was made and the Payee Information will automatically be loaded into all the appropriate fields. Verify all the information for the payee and expenditure are correct and click *Submit* to save the expenditure in ERTS.

It is important that you utilize the "Search" feature whenever you are adding expenditures. This will allow ERTS to store each of your payees in its database. If you frequently have expenditures to the same payee, this will make it easier as you will not have to enter that payee's information each time.

If you fail to use the Search feature, you more than likely continue creating duplicate payee records for the same individual or organization, which will problematic if you ever need to update the payees contact information in the database using the Payee Maintenance section since you will have multiple entries to change for the same payee.

Payee Maintenance Section (see Fig. 20)

If a previous payee has new contact information and you are making another expenditure to the payee, do not add a new expenditure to the payee until you have updated their entry in the database. In the *Payee Maintenance Section* (see Fig 20.), click on *Update a Payee* and you will be taken to the *Donor/Payee Update* page (see Fig. 22)

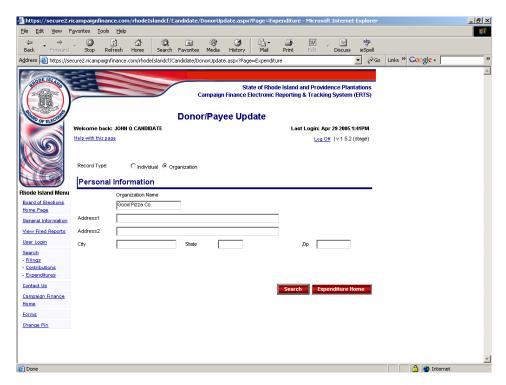


Fig. 22 - Donor/Payee Update page

Once you arrive at the Donor/Payee Update page, select whether the payee is an individual or an organization and the fields on the page will change accordingly. Then enter the payee's last name into the Last Name field or enter the name of the organization if relevant, and click *Search*. ERTS will search the database for all payees with the last name or organization name you specified. All matches will be displayed at the bottom of the page. Click the name of the payee you wish to update. (See **Fig. 22.1**)





Fig. 22.1 – Payee update search results ERTS USER MANUAL

Fig. 22.2 – Edit payee information *MARCH 2006*

Once you have updated the payee's information, click *Fix* at the bottom-left of the screen to save the changes. (See **Fig. 22.2**) You will then be returned to the *Expenditures Administration* page.

Searching for an Expenditure (See Fig. 23)

There are times when you may need to search for a specific expenditure to a particular payee. Searching ERTS for an expenditure is done within the *Expenditures Administration* section (see Fig. 20). Click on the *Find* button to access the *Expenditure Update* page (see Fig. 23).

At the *Expenditures Update* page, enter in the as much information about the expenditure as you know. For example, enter in the name of the payee (see Fig. 23).

The results for the search will appear at the top of the page (see Fig. 24). If no results are displayed, try broadening your search by including less information. If the search yields results, click on one of the options shown to the right of the contribution.

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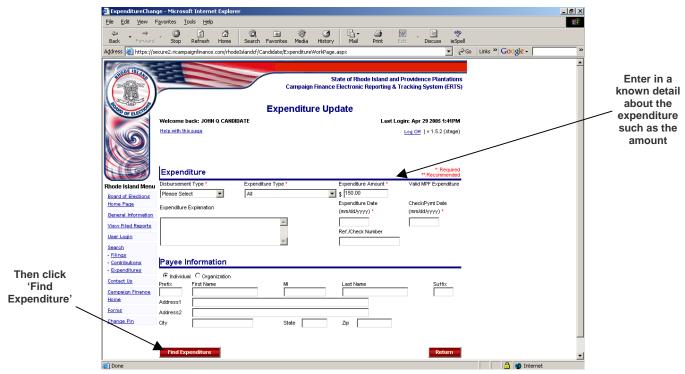


Fig. 23 - Expenditure Update page

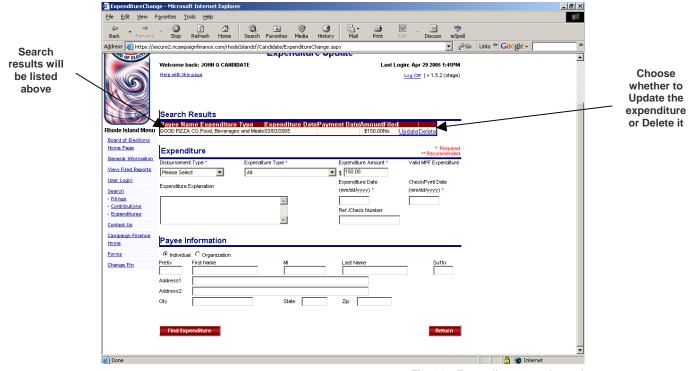


Fig. 24 - Expenditure search results

<u>Updating an Expenditure (See Fig. 25)</u>

If you choose to update an expenditure you searched for, click the "*Update*" link to be taken to the *Expenditure Update* page. Change any details of the expenditure that need to be changed. The only detail you *cannot* change is the *Disbursement Type*. Once you are finished, click "*Update Expenditure*".

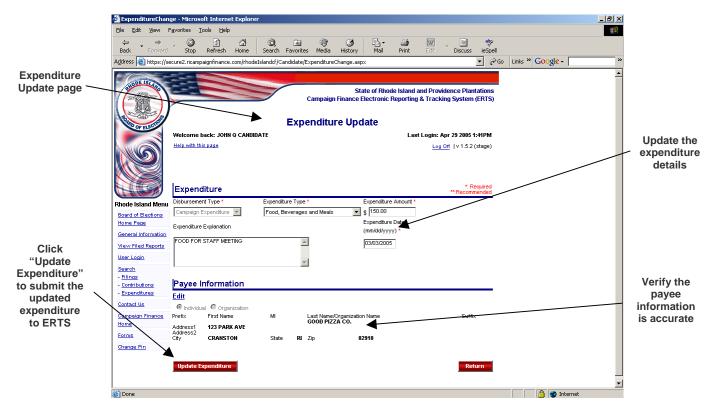


Fig. 25 – Expenditure Update page

Deleting an Expenditure

If you need to delete an expenditure you searched for, click the "Delete link" (see Fig. 24) and a modified version of the Update Expenditure page will display. A confirmation message asking if you wish to delete the expenditure will display at the top-left of the screen. Click "Yes" to delete the expenditure, or click "No" to cancel. (See Fig. 26)

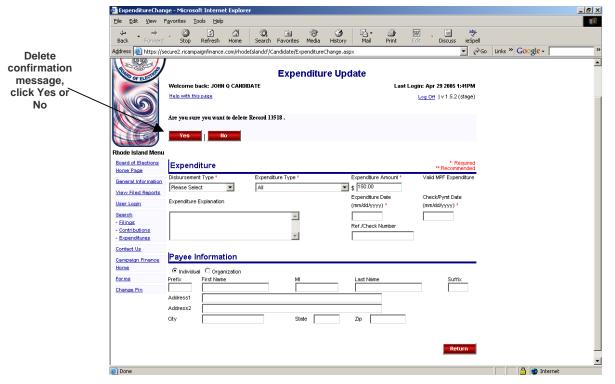


Fig. 26 - Delete expenditure confirmation

Filing Reports

Clicking on the *Filings* tab in the *Organization Overview* page will bring you to the Filings page where the Treasurer of the organization may submit filings to the Board of Elections and review filings already submitted.

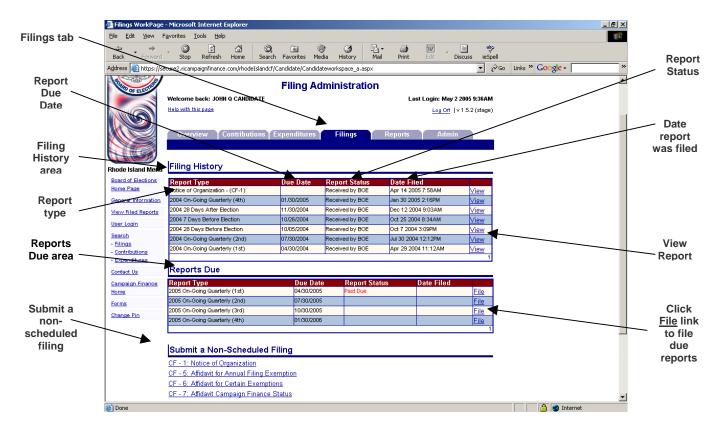


Fig. 27 - Filing Administration section

Filing History Area (see Fig. 27)

The Filing History area contains all the filings submitted to the Board of Elections. You can view both the electronic and scanned original (if any) version of the filing.

- Report Type: This is the report which is due to be filed soon.
- Due Date: The date the report must be filed through ERTS.
- Report Status: Will indicate weather the form is filed of un-filed.
- Date Filed: Indicates date the report was filed.
- View: Click to view the report

Reports Due Area (see Fig. 27)

The Reports Due area allows you to easily see the status of various report types. The report status column will indicate whether the report is past due. This area omits the "View" and "Amend" links and displays:

• *File*: Click to electronically file the report through ERTS.

Non-Scheduled Filing Area (see Fig. 27)

The Non-Scheduled Filing area contains all the filings that may be submitted to the Board of Elections. You may choose one of the listed forms to file if they are not on your filing schedule on the *Organization Overview Page*



Do not submit a filing from the Filing Reports section if it is on your filing schedule. Doing so may cause ERTS to incorrectly determine that you are late in filing a report.

Filing Reports (see Fig. 28)

Once you are ready to file a *report which is on your filing schedule*, click the "File" link next to the report you wish to file. (See Fig. 27) You will be taken to the CF-2 Summary of Campaign Activity screen (Fig. 28).

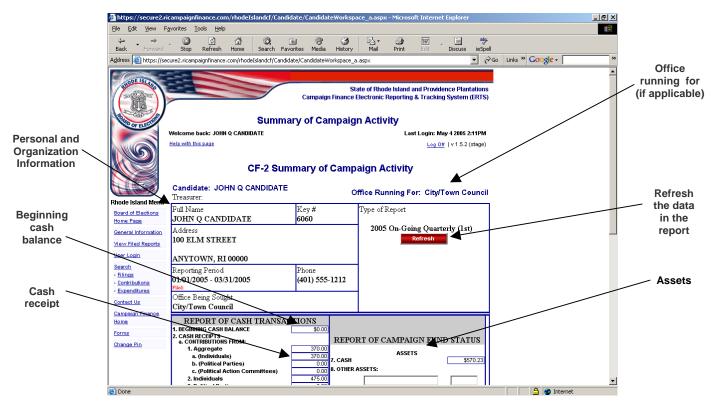


Fig. 28 - CF-2 Summary of Campaign Activity Upper Screen

Once the CF-2 Summary of Campaign Activity screen appears, verify the Candidate, Treasurer or Organization name and contact information are correct.

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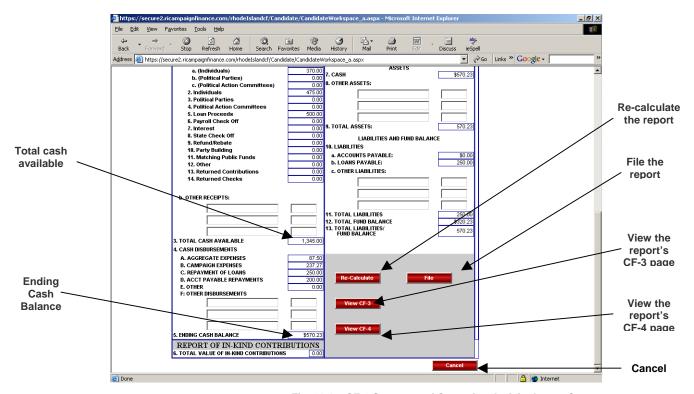


Fig. 28.1 - CF-2 Summary of Campaign Activity Lower Screen

Once you have verified that all of the fields on the Summary of Campaign Activity are accurate, click "File" to submit the report to ERTS. (See Fig. 28.1) Once you click "File", a confirmation dialog box will appear asking you if you are sure you want to file the report (see Fig. 29). Click OK to submit the report, or click "Cancel" to return to the CF-2 Summary of Campaign Activity screen without filing the report.

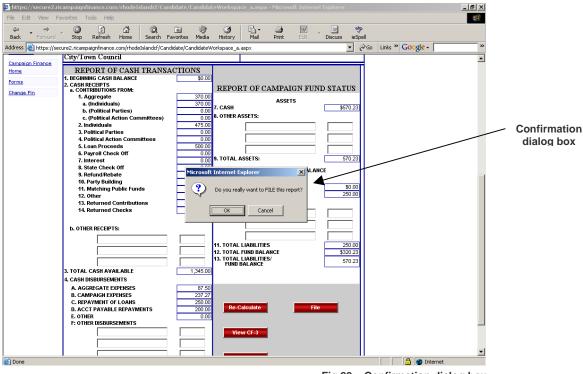


Fig 29 - Confirmation dialog box

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Fig. 30 - Filing confirmation screen

Once ERTS has successfully saved your report, you will see a filing confirmation screen. (See Fig. 30) You click "Click here to View Report" if you wish to view your report as you filed it with ERTS. It is recommended you print this screen for your records.

Amending Filed Reports (see Fig. 31)

If you need to amend a report you have already filed, you may submit an amended report to the Board of Elections through ERTS. To submit an amended report, click on the "Filings" tab to get to the Filing Administration page (see Fig. 31). Under the Filing History area of the page, locate the report you wish to amend and click the Amend link next to the report.

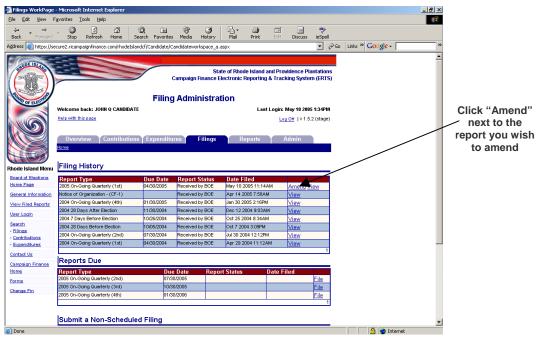


Fig. 31 - Amending a report through the Filing Administration page

Once you click the "Amend" link, you be taken to the summary of campaign activity screen, as you were when you initially filed the report. Verify the changes you have made are incorporated into the amended filing and click "File" to submit the report to the Board of Elections through ERTS.

A confirmation screen will appear asking you to confirm you wish to file the report. Click "OK" to submit the amended filing, or click cancel to not submit the filing. If you click "OK" to file the report, a confirmation screen will appear informing you that your report has been filed. It is recommended you print this report for your records.

Creating Activity Reports

Through ERTS, you have the capability to view and print activity reports for your organization. Activity can include any of the following items:

- Contributions
- Expenditures
- Loan Status
- Account Payable Status
- AP Repayment Status

The report can be customized according to a variety of criteria including: election cycle, date range, contribution type, donor last name, organization name, amount, filing status, and contribution status. Additionally, you can choose to create a summary report or a detailed report.

To create a report for your organization, click on the "Reports" tab on the Navigation Bar. This will take you to the Organization Reports screen (Fig. 32). Select the criteria on which you wish to base the report.

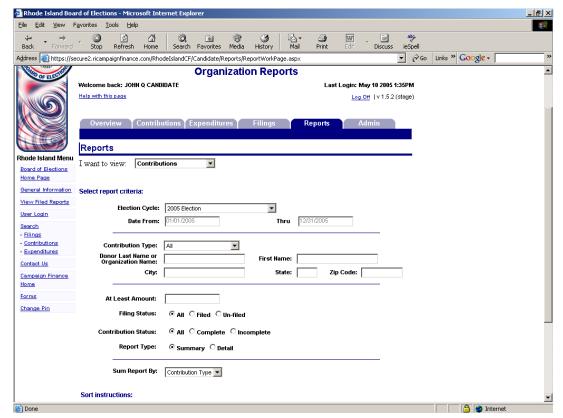


Fig. 32 - Organization Reports upper screen

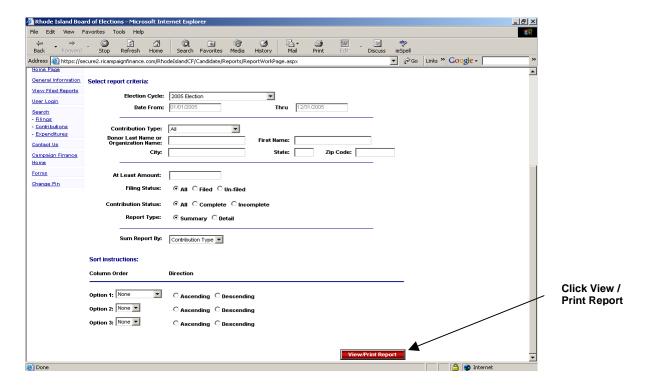


Fig. 33 - Organization Reports lower screen

Click "View/Print" Report and ERTS will display your report onscreen (Fig. 33). The report is formatted to be easily printed. To print the report, use your browser's print function by going to File>Print within your browser, or export detail to comma delimited file. Click on Return to go back to the criteria selection page for another report. (See Fig. 34)

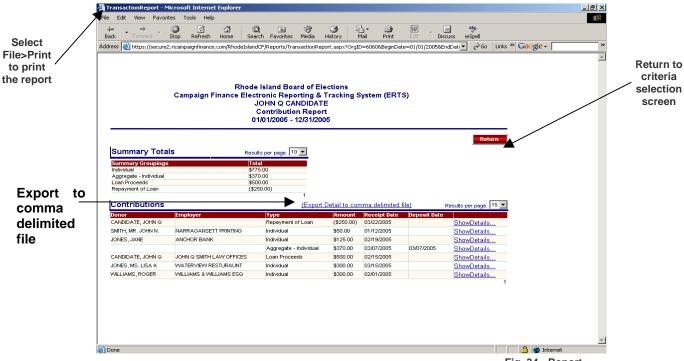


Fig. 34 - Report

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Administrative Functions

ERTS allows you to customize some settings in order to make entering data easier and less time-consuming. This is done on the *Organization Administration* page, which you can access by clicking on the "*Admin*" tab on the *Navigation Bar*. Once at the *Organization Administration* page (Fig 35.), you will see several features and sections of importance.

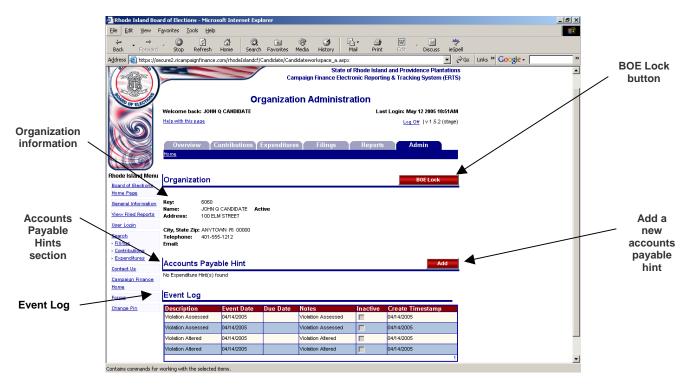


Fig. 35 - Organization Administration screen

BOE Lock button (see Fig. 35)

By default, ERTS prevents the Board of Elections from accessing your organization's data. You have the option to grant the Board of Elections permission to access your data so that they can assist you in entering data or submitting filings.

Organization (see Fig. 35)

This area contains the contact information for your organization. It also lists your key number. If any of the information is incorrect, please contact the Board of Elections immediately. If you wish to add or change any of the contact information, you will need to submit form CF-1.

Accounts Payable Hint (see Fig. 35)

ERTS enables you to use *Accounts Payable Hints* for accounts payable (AP) expenditures to assist matching charges to a repayment of those charges (AP Repayment expenditure). To add a new account payable hint, click the "*Add*" button in the *Accounts Payable Hint* section.